



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Not Just a Transformer Station

USAID helps bring round-the-clock, reliable power to Chaharikar in Parwan Province



Photo: USAID/AECB

This transformer station is providing increased electrical power to the city of Chaharikar in Parwan province.

Dependable electrical power provided with the assistance of USAID's Afghanistan Energy Capacity Building project has led to an increase in jobs and a decrease in conflicts between the agricultural and industrial sectors in Chaharikar.

To the residents of Chaharikar, the capital of Parwan Province, blackouts were a common occurrence. With an estimated population of more than 100,000, the city received its power from a small 2.4-megawatt hydropower plant. Demand for electricity was approximately five times what the plant could provide. Because the power plant relied on water to generate power, there was a constant battle between the agricultural sector and the power plant for the use of the precious resource. It was clear that another power source was needed to provide Chaharikar's residents and businesses with electricity.

USAID's Afghanistan Energy Capacity Building (AECB) project stepped in to fill the gap. Project advisors worked with Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, the Afghan power utility, to upgrade a transformer station that primarily supplied power to a flourmill. In late February 2010, a new 20 kV power line from the Chimtala power substation to Chaharikar was energized, along with seven of 17 transformer stations. The power line began to bring more electricity to the city via the upgraded transformer station.

At first, the primary demand came from the flourmill. However, within a matter of weeks, more power connections and increased mill production required an increase in the capacity of the transformer. The stable, round-the-clock power was highly desired throughout Chaharikar and demand continued to grow.

Currently, the 0.63-megawatt transformer provides electricity to essential public service buildings including the Parwan Hospital, police stations, local government headquarters, and many private businesses.

Provincial government officials in Parwan have reported that, as a result of reliable power, unemployment decreased from 60 to 40 percent, an estimated 3,000 new jobs were created, and private businesses increased by 25 percent. Additionally, the conflict between the agricultural sector and the hydropower plant operation has been eliminated due to the significantly reduced demand for hydropower.

All of these advances were summarized by the Governor of Parwan Province, who said, "Development regarding electricity has come for the first time to my people."